

BROOKLYN SURVEY

GREENPOINT

PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT



N.Y.C. LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION
305 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, N.Y. 10007

AVERY ARCHITECTURAL AND FINE ARTS LIBRARY

GIFT OF SEYMOUR B. DURST OLD YORK LIBRARY

offsite
F
129
B7
N62
19502

LANDMARKS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Beverly Moss Spatt
Chairman

Morris Ketchum, Jr.
Vice Chairman

Margaret Beyer
R. Michael Brown
Elisabeth Coit

George R. Collins
William J. Conklin
Barbaralee Diamonstein

Thomas J. Evans
James Marston Fitch
Marie V. McGovern

Commissioners

Lenore Norman
Executive Director

Alan Burnham
Director of Research

Margaret H. Tuft
Director of Preservation

Prepared by the Community Development Staff

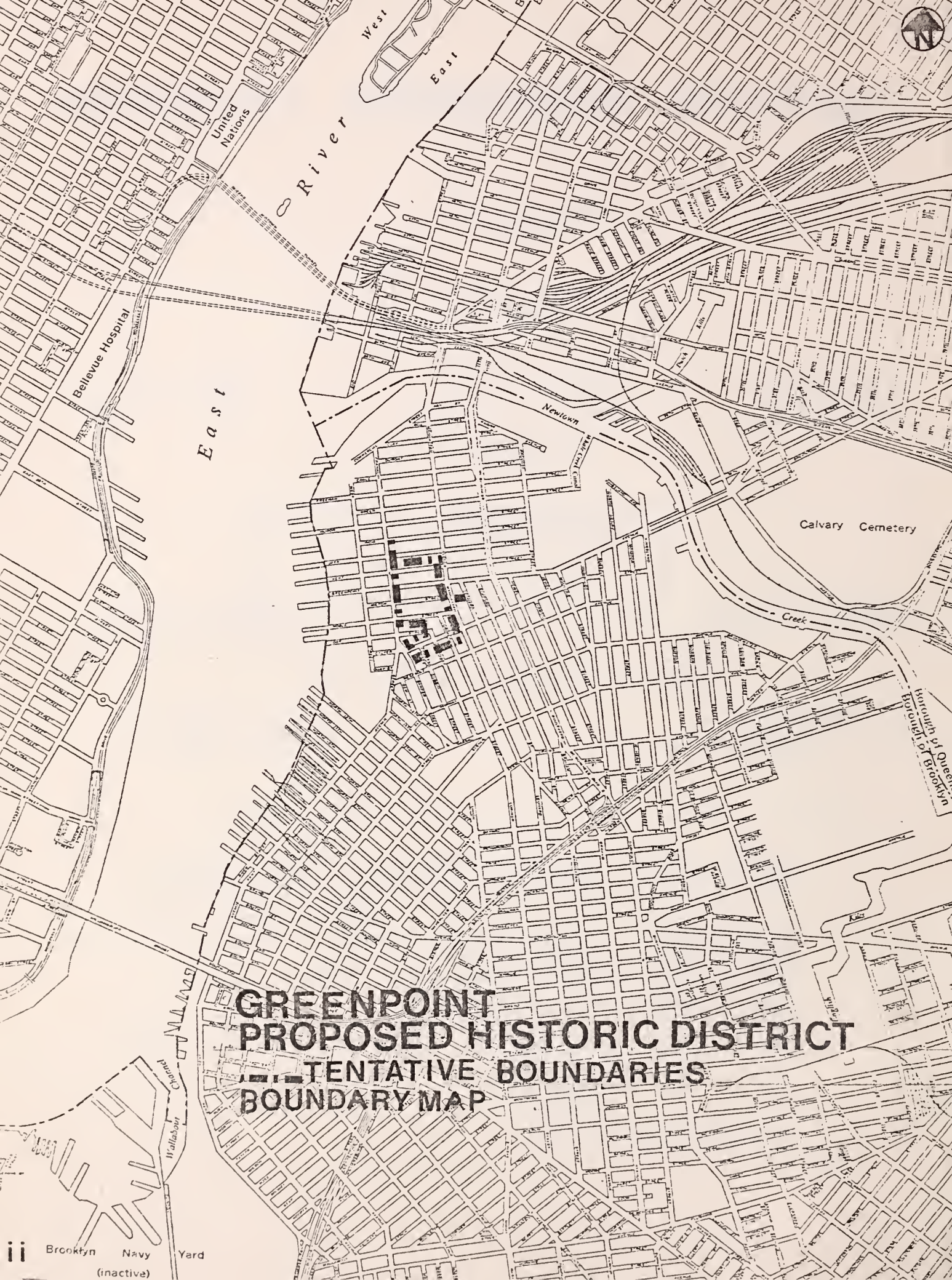
Edwin Friedman
Director of Planning and Field
Services

Henry F. Ludder, Jr.
Project Supervisor

The primary responsibilities of the staff for Greenpoint were:

Luella A. Boddewyn - Research and Coordinator of Written Report
Rachel D. Carley - Architectural Description, Graphic Preparation
Mary B. Dierickx (former staff member) - Field and Historic Research,
Graphic Preparation
James T. Dillon - Field and Historic Research, Architectural Description
Andrew S. Dolkart - Records Research, Photography
Peter H. Kunz - Architectural Description, Graphic Preparation
Sarah T. Latham - Architectural Description
Gloria S. McDarragh - Field and Community Research and Description
Paul M. Sachner - Field Research, Architectural Description, Graphic
Preparation
Karen S. Vaughan - Field, Community and Planning Research, Graphic
Preparation

Drawings by Robert Buckley



**GREENPOINT
PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT
TENTATIVE BOUNDARIES
BOUNDARY MAP**

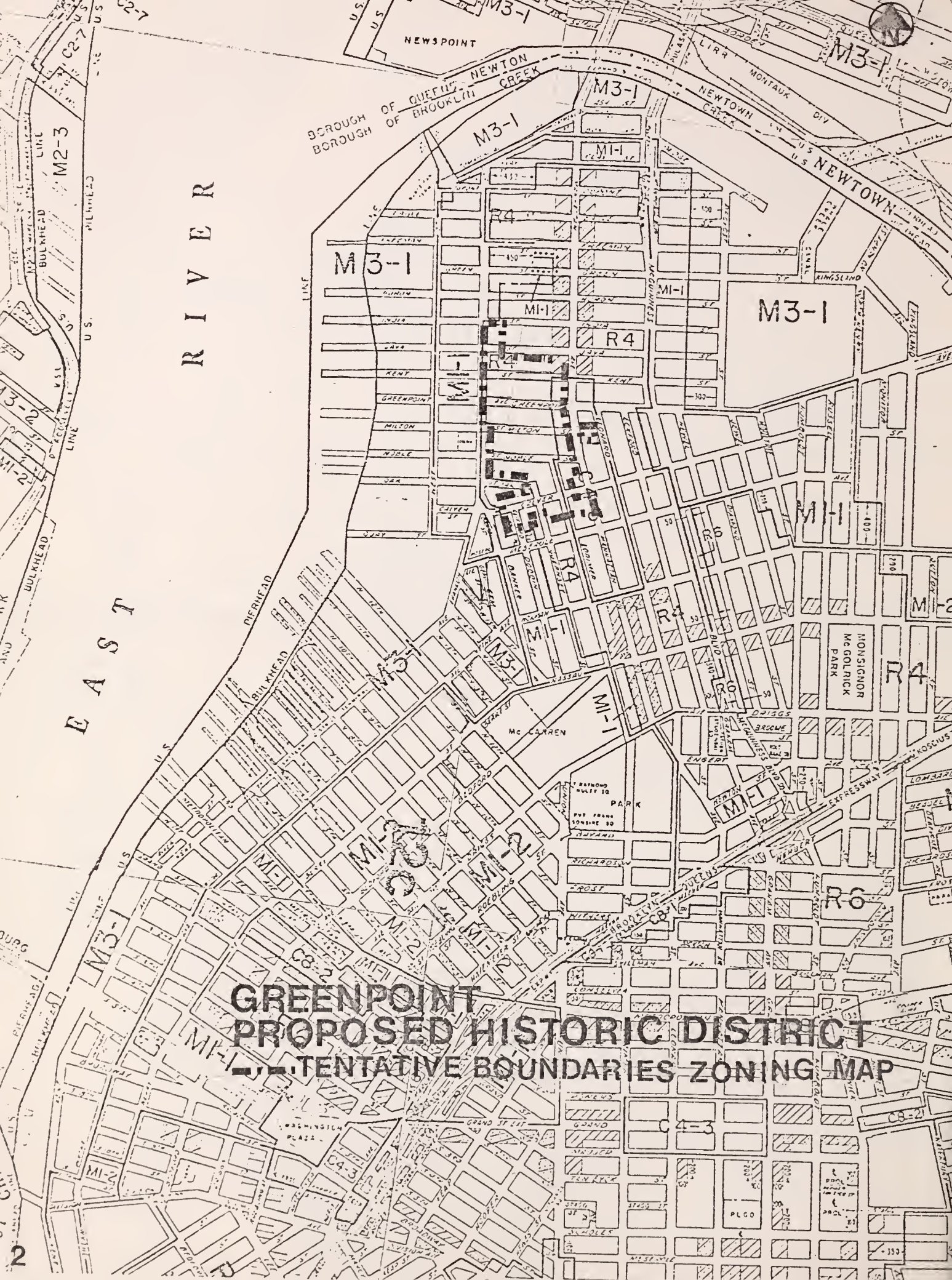
GENERAL DESCRIPTION

A tightly-knit ethnic community still maintaining its individuality, Greenpoint is an interesting study in contrasts. Shops selling imported Polish merchandise stand next to such typical American institutions as fast food franchises. A feeling of small-town friendliness and informality characterizes interchanges among local residents. Yet a casual stroll along the Avenue is also punctuated by striking views of the Empire State Building, a short distance away across the East River. Located in northern Brooklyn, all of Greenpoint falls within Community Board #1.

The neighborhood is contained in a triangular area bound by Newtown Creek to the north and east, the East River to the west and the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway to the south.

The study area examined in depth by the technical staff of the Landmarks Preservation Commission is bound on the north by India Street, on the south by Calyer Street including portions of Clifford Place, Guernsey Street and Lorimer Street, on the west by Franklin Street, and on the east by the rear lot lines of buildings on Manhattan Avenue. Within this area is a section of cohesive significant architecture. It is primarily a rectangular area with a northern extension and some other irregularities in the lines. A separate group consisting of St. Anthony of Padua church, its rectory and convent on the eastern side of Manhattan Avenue, has also been included. More precise lines are shown on the Boundary Map, but these lines themselves are tentative and subject to revision.

Occupying land that remained rural until the early nineteenth century, present-day Greenpoint still resembles a small town. Manhattan Avenue, its most



RIVER

EAST

**GREENPOINT
PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT
TENTATIVE BOUNDARIES ZONING MAP**

important commercial street, runs through the heart of the residential area from north to south. Lined on both sides with four and five-story late nineteenth-century structures, it could serve as a model for the archetypal "Main Street" of middle America. However, the Avenue is not uniquely commercial because many buildings with ground floor stores have apartments upstairs. Off on the quiet residential streets, carefully maintained intact nineteenth-century houses alternate with renovated houses whose original character is completely obscured by permastone or asphalt siding. Moving away from the center of the area, nineteenth-century rowhouses and frame dwellings gradually merge with and give way to industrial buildings. The edges of the area are characterized by industrial structures.

Mixed industrial-residential zoning was introduced in Greenpoint in 1974 with R6(M1-1) zoning along Franklin Street between Eagle and Java Streets and around McCarren Park. Manhattan Avenue between Kent and Norman Streets is zoned C4-3, subregional commercial center, with a C2-1 overlay between India and Eagle Streets and a C1-1 overlay over the remainder of the Avenue. The rest of the area is zoned R6 which, while somewhat higher than the existing coverage, was intended to encourage infill housing and to permit additions or alterations. Such activities were recently stimulated by the rezoning of the residential areas in 1974 when R4 areas were changed to R6.

The population of Greenpoint has been built up by successive waves of immigrants from Ireland, Italy and, most recently, Eastern Europe, according to a City Planning Commission study on Greenpoint in 1974. Northern Greenpoint, the study area, has been characterized as being essentially a Slavic community with a grouping of Puerto Ricans around the northwestern edge of the neighborhood and a small percentage of Irish and Italian families throughout the area.

Community institutions and organizations reflect the preponderance of people with a Polish background. National headquarters for Polish fraternal and social

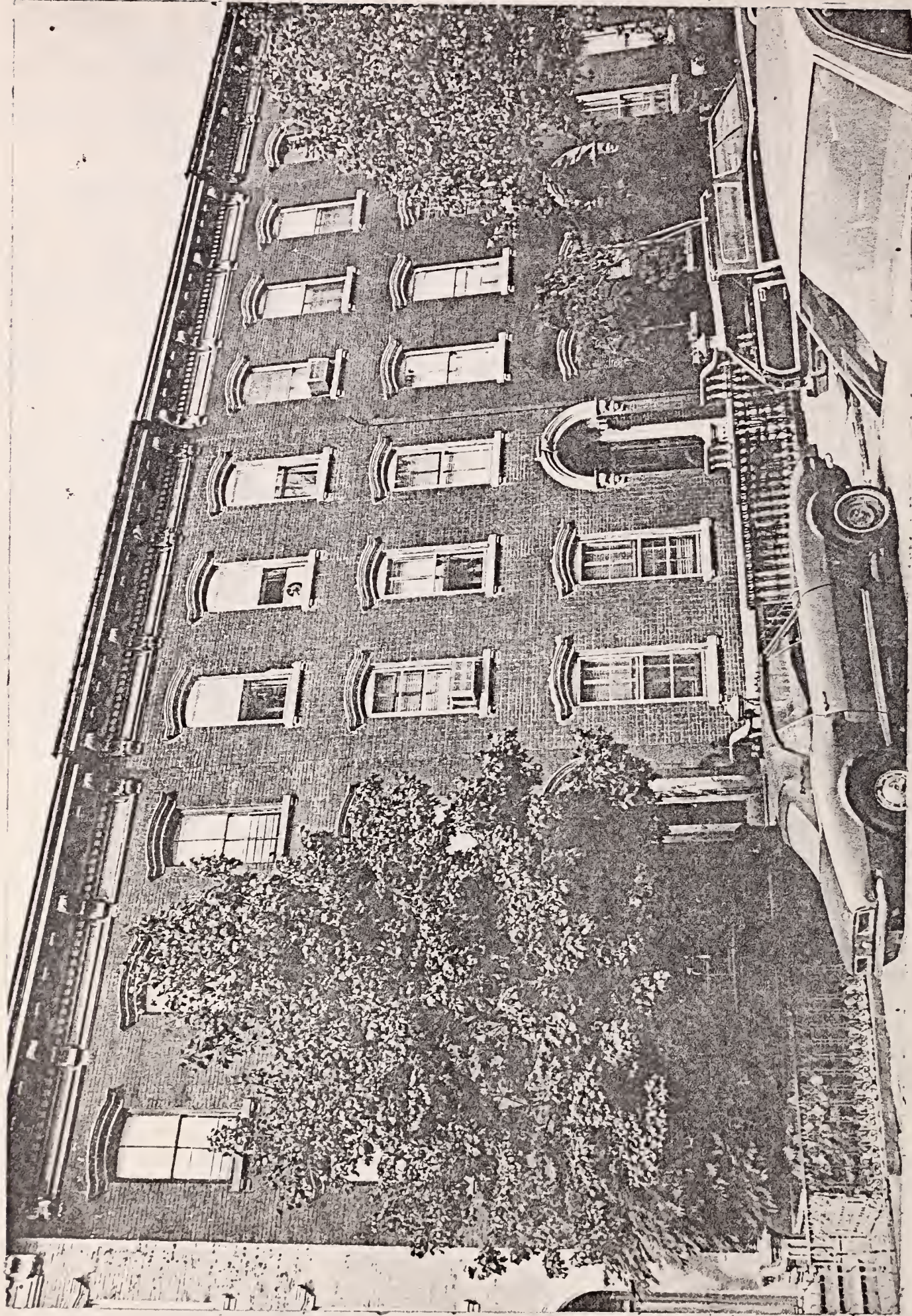


**GREENPOINT
PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT
TENTATIVE BOUNDARIES
BOUNDARY MAP**

groups are in Greenpoint, as well as Eastern European churches and parochial schools.

The Greenpoint Savings Bank's main office, at 807 Manhattan Avenue, is actively involved in community affairs, providing meeting space for neighborhood groups and a mailing address. A December 6, 1976 New York Times article quoted from a study by the New York Public Interest Research Group citing the bank as an "honorable" exception to the pattern followed by many of Brooklyn's largest savings banks of investing only a "tiny percentage" of their deposits in mortgages on Brooklyn residential properties.

Active neighborhood and church organizations in the area are united under the Greenpoint Civic Council. This group is interested in stabilizing Greenpoint and hopes to reverse the trend of young people moving away.



97 MILTON STREET

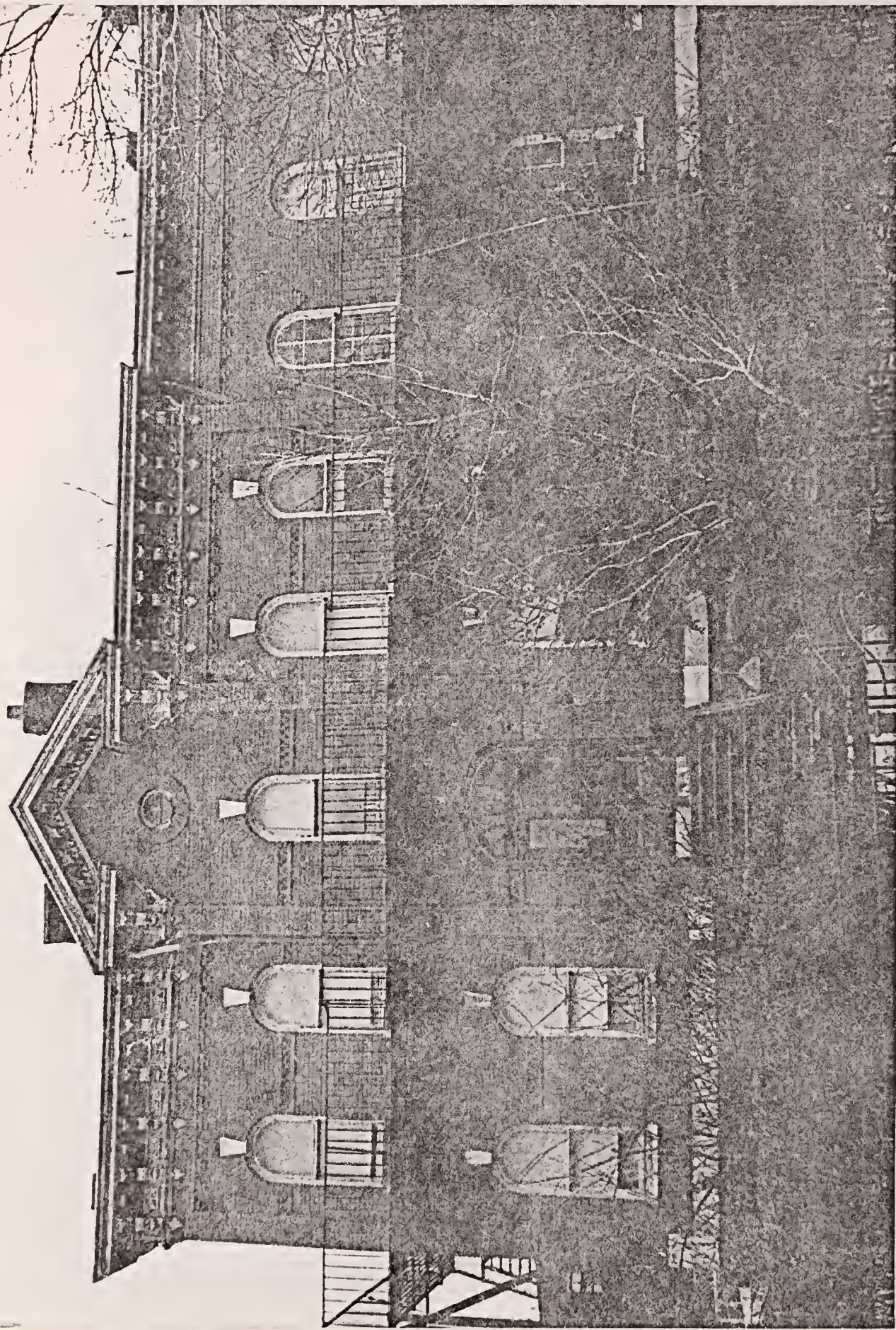
HISTORY

Influenced by the tall grasses that once covered the area, seventeenth-century Dutch traders gave Greenpoint its original name of Green Hoek (Hook). It was not until the early years of the nineteenth century that the area became known as Greenpoint.

The land of present-day Greenpoint was purchased from the Indians by the Dutch West India Company in 1638. It became a portion of the town of Bushwick. For many years the area was isolated and was divided into large farms. At the time of the Revolution, the entire population consisted of five farming families and their slaves. Each family had its own market boat which they used to take their produce down the East River to New York.

The beginnings of modern Greenpoint date back to 1832 when Nezhiah Bliss and Dr. Eliphalet Nott, president of Union College, bought thirty acres of the Meserole farm. In 1833, the two men purchased another local farm belonging to the Griffin family. Bliss had the entire area surveyed at his own expense and laid out into streets. He was originally from Hebron, Connecticut but had married Mary Meserole, a Greenpoint farmer's daughter. Bliss continued to play an important role in Greenpoint's development.

The first houses were almost all frame dwellings. Due to the extreme muddiness of the ground, many houses were built on stilts, "bearing very much the appearance of having been commenced at the roof and gradually built downward, a sufficient number of stories being appended to reach the ground." (Stiles, p. 287) With the advent of new construction, settlers were attracted from the east side of New York and Greenpoint experienced a real estate boom. The first known speculative builder was a mason named John Hillyer.



GREENPOINT HOME FOR THE AGED OAK STREET

With an influx of population, the first public highway that made Greenpoint accessible by land was opened in 1838. The road followed present-day Franklin Street, crossed Newtown and Bushwick Creeks by bridge, and joined the existing turnpike that linked Williamsburg to Astoria, Queens. Shortly afterwards, Alpheus D. Rollins, a Greenpoint carpenter who was particularly skilled in ship-building, built a large rowboat and started the first regular ferry service between Greenpoint and New York City. A robust man, Rollins rowed the boat back and forth himself, charging his customers three cents a trip. Business became so good that the rowboat soon proved inadequate and Rollins built a fleet of four or five catboats.

Once ferry service was available, Greenpoint became not only a residential area but also a popular excursion place for picnickers from the east side of New York. On warm summer Sundays the crowds from New York City were so large that even the catboats could not carry them all. Rollins had to charter a steam ferry boat to accommodate all the tired city dwellers who longed "to wander at will, and pick wild flowers on the hills and in the dales that led back from the point toward the almost unknown stretches of Long Island," (Brooklyn Eagle, October 2, 1930)

Around 1850, Nezhiah Bliss started a steam ferry service from East 10th Street in New York and shortly afterwards, a second ferry line was established from East 23rd Street. The ferries both terminated at Greenpoint Avenue.

During the centuries when Greenpoint was a rural farming community, churches, schools and stores were provided by Bushwick Village whose center was located at the junction of Metropolitan and Bushwick Avenues. Once Greenpoint became settled, these services developed locally. By the mid-1840's, Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist and Dutch Reformed denominations all opened churches in Greenpoint. P.S. 22 had its beginnings in a school house erected in 1846 on the hill east of Manhattan Avenue between Java and Kent. Around 1840 the first local store also opened.



FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF GREENPOINT/^{now} UNION BAPTIST
135 NOBLE STREET

Greenpoint was annexed to the city of Brooklyn in 1855. At this time, Nezhiah Bliss was chosen to represent it on the Board of Aldermen of the consolidated city.

While the residential area was growing inland, shipbuilding was starting on the nearby waterfront. The first boats were built from wood and included many graceful clipper ships. By the time of the Civil War, ship technology had advanced to the point of including iron components. The famed Monitor was built at the Continental Shipbuilding Corporation at 64 Calyer Street. By the 1870s shipbuilding began to decline in importance, gradually giving way to other industries. The growth of new industry such as jute mills and oil refineries brought large numbers of Polish immigrants to work and live in Greenpoint. Being a thrifty and industrious group, a very large proportion of the Polish families bought their own homes. They also immediately introduced their own cultural activities and foods, causing the area to be nicknamed Little Poland. To the present day, Polish people remain the most important ethnic group in Greenpoint.



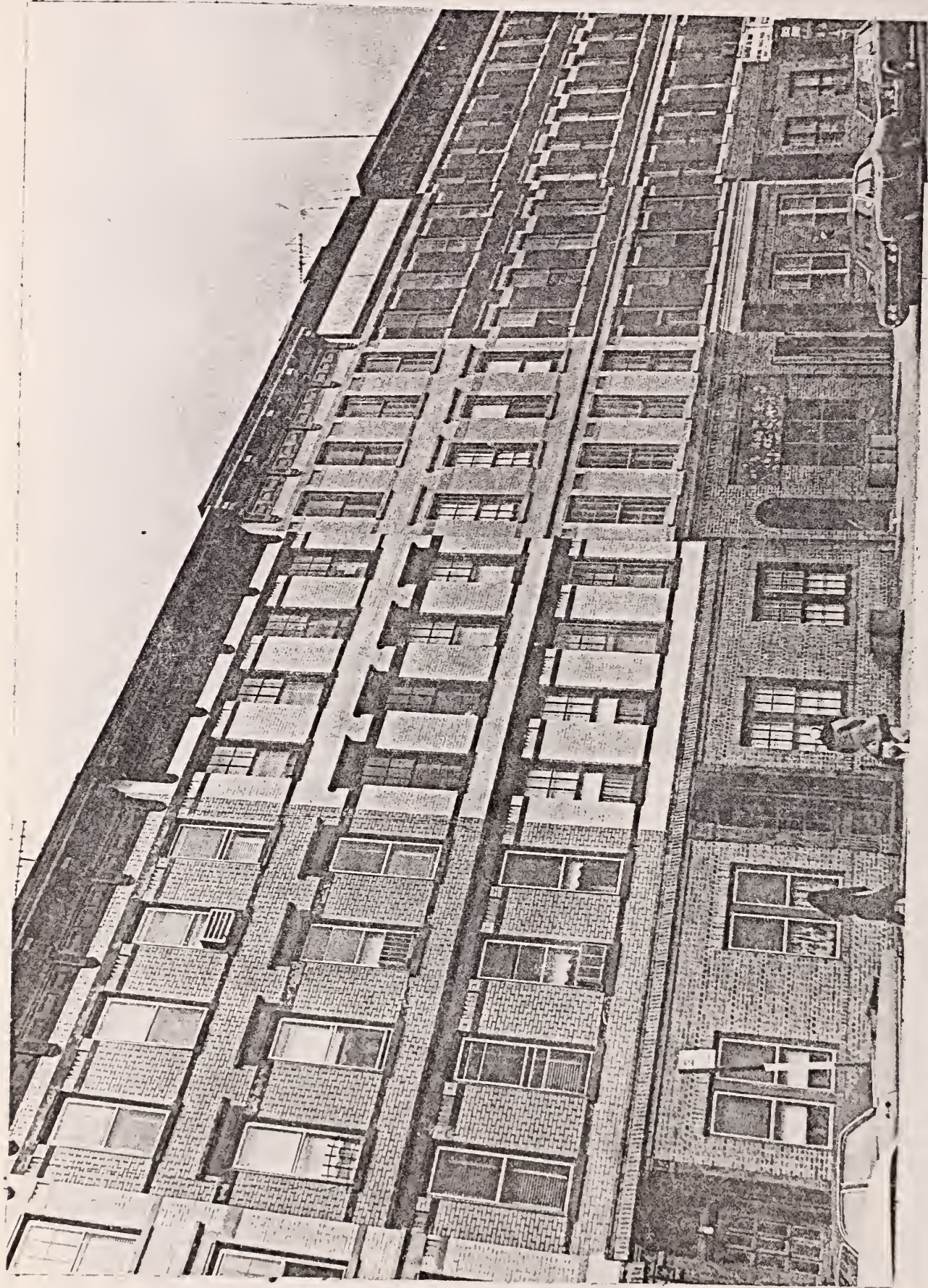
144-146 KENT STREET

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION

Despite its location just across the East River from midtown Manhattan, Greenpoint has remained an enclave of intact nineteenth-century architecture. Many early nineteenth-century frame dwellings as well as brick and brownstone rowhouses built after the Civil War still line Greenpoint's quiet residential streets. Another interesting feature of this study area is the prominence of ecclesiastical structures.

Kent Street between Manhattan and Franklin Avenues contains a mixture of domestic styles dating from the third quarter of the nineteenth century and two notable churches. The style most frequently found along the street is the Italianate. Numbers 144 and 146 represent two of the best examples of that mode. Built for Samuel Wark and John C. Orr in 1874, they were designed by George A. Kingsland. Each handsome, three-story house is three bays wide and rests on a rusticated basement. A wide, projecting cornice has foliate brackets. The windows have strong molded enframements with projecting lintels and sills that rest on scrolled corbels. The first floor windows are full length and have enframements that are slightly more elaborate than the others. Heavy balustrades resting on corbels are located at the base of these windows. The arched doorways have an elaborate enframement with a triangular pediment supported by foliate brackets. The stoops retain their original balustrades and newel posts while a matching fence defines the areaway. Both houses are intact and well-maintained.

St. Elias Greek Rite Catholic Church, at 143 Kent Street, originally the Greenpoint Dutch Reformed Church, was built in 1869 in a style that combines early Romanesque Revival and Victorian Gothic elements. The adjoining chapel

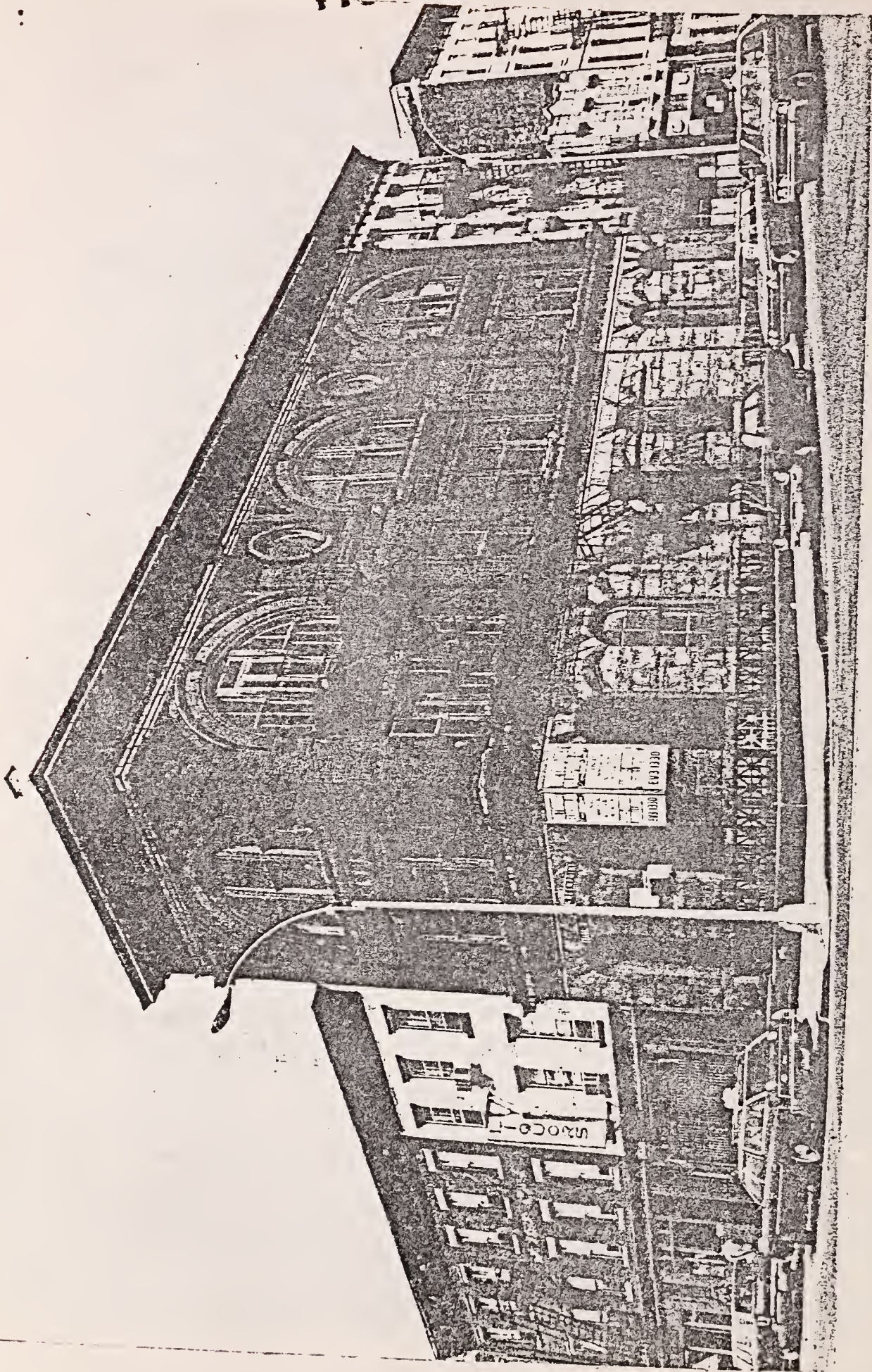


83-123 N/S GREENPOINT AVENUE

and Sunday school building was designed by W. Wheeler Smith, a New York City architect, in 1879. The church is a gable-fronted building with projecting flanking towers. The central section has a projecting pedimented porch with shouldered ends and is pierced by a round-arch entrance. Above this is a rose window. The voussoirs of all the openings are alternating dark and light stone with their extrados forming a pointed arch. The eastern tower was intended to have a spire 175 feet high.

The Church of the Ascension (1866), an Anglican church on the north side of Kent Street, was designed by Henry C. Dudley of the noted firm of Wills & Dudley. Dudley came to the United States from England in the 1850's to work with Wills. Together they designed churches throughout the country, primarily Gothic Revival structures reminiscent of medieval English parish churches. The Church of the Ascension is a Gothic structure built of randomly laid rough-faced stone with brownstone trim in a rustic setting of shade trees and small, evergreen plantings. The massing is simple but striking. A steeply pitched roof covers the nave and is flanked by gradually pitched roofs covering the side aisles. The main facade, which fronts on Kent Street, is the gable end. It is composed of three sections divided by buttresses. The central section defines the nave and has four lancet windows with a bull's eye window centered above them. This section is flanked by lancet-arched entrances whose handsomely carved doors are surmounted by bull's eye windows.

Greenpoint Avenue, between Franklin Street and Manhattan Avenue, is within the study area. The north side of the street is largely residential presenting an architecturally unified blockfront of mostly neo-Grec tenements. These include a long row of twenty-one, four-story high brick tenements done by E.B. Ackerly, a Greenpoint architect, in 1885. The row features projecting neo-Grec wooden cornices composed of five large brackets and a panelled frieze. Stone belt courses intersect with window lintels on the second and fourth-story



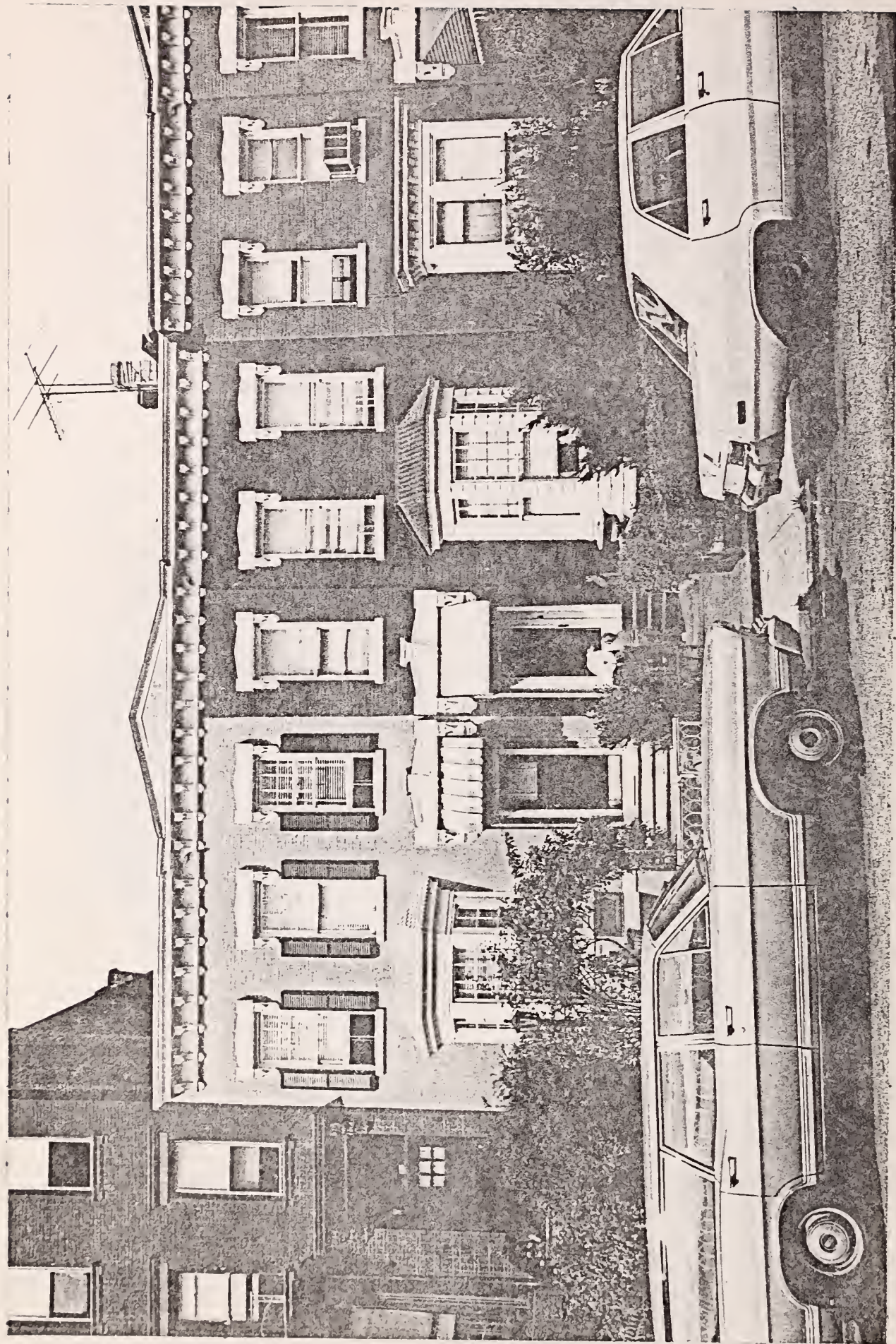
MECHANICS' AND TRADERS' BANK
FRANKLIN STREET

levels. A thinner stone band, separated from the belt course by panels of diagonally laid or saw-tooth brick, appears on the second and fourth-floor windows. The third-floor windows have stone bands that give the impression of intersecting label lintels. When constructed, each tenement consisted of a ground-floor store with flats for six families above (two families per floor). In the 1920's the ground-floor commercial area was altered for residential use. Today only Nos. 119 and 121 retain their original storefronts.

On the northeast corner of Greenpoint Avenue and Franklin Street is the former Mechanics' and Traders' Bank, built in the late 1890's in a late version of the Romanesque Revival style. The building has a rough-faced stone ground floor pierced by round-arched double-hung windows. A simple cornice over the ground floor separates it from the stately upper two floors which are constructed of brick, terra cotta and metal. Broad round-arched bays vertically join the windows of the second and third floor as do the monumental Corinthian pilasters. A full entablature crowns the building.

Milton Street, between Franklin Street and Manhattan Avenue, contains some of the area's finest rowhouses. The buildings on either side of the street are low, mainly brick and from two to four stories in height. On the south side of the street, just east of Franklin and west of Manhattan, are some re-sided frame structures.

Nos. 93-109 Milton Street is a long row of nine, three-story Italianate houses from the 1870's. Each house is entered from a low stoop through a handsome round-arched doorway that is graced with an iron lintel that follows the full curve of the arch. These lintels are embellished with foliate keystones and impost blocks. Each of the segmental-arched windows has an iron molded lintel and a sill carried on small, delicate brackets. The buildings are crowned by bracketed and modillioned roof cornices with panelled fascia boards,



119-123 MILTON STREET

The four neo-Grec houses at Nos. 119-127 Milton Street are divided into two pairs. Each pair is treated to look like a larger house with a slightly projecting, pedimented central section through which each house is entered. The entrances have heavy panelled lintels with keystones and end blocks that are supported by angular brackets that echo those of the roof cornice. The window lintels are similar though simpler than those over the doors. All the houses are set back from the street behind gardens and are crowned with bracketed roof cornices. These houses are quite similar in design to No. 138 Milton Street which is now used as the Greenpoint Reformed Church.

The dignified pair of brick Queen Anne houses at Nos. 122 and 124 Milton Street stand three stories above a high rough-faced stone basement. The parlor-floor bays of both houses are three windows wide and joined by a segmental arch of rough-faced stone voussoirs that continue into quoins. The carved keystones carry shell-like corbels which support curved oriels in which three windows are set at angles. The windows of the upper floor have small curved brackets carrying heavy lintels. The lintels of 122 are curved and those on 124 are pedimented. On No. 124, the oriel and two-window bay at the 2nd and 3rd floors are vertically joined by pilasters and band courses. This vertical union is further enhanced by the slight projection of the roof cornice and dentilled pediment over this section. The most impressive element of these houses is their paired entrances and "L"-shaped stoops that create a grand approach to the buildings. A heavy cornice slab over each door is supported by small granite columns carried on large brackets.

Other noteworthy houses on Milton Street are the row of seven symmetrically arranged neo-Classical brick houses on the north side of the street, Nos. 139-151. The animated arrangement of projecting bays and round-arched loggias are in delightful juxtaposition to the proper neo-Gothic St. John's Lutheran Church adjoining to the east. One of the charming features of Milton Street is the group

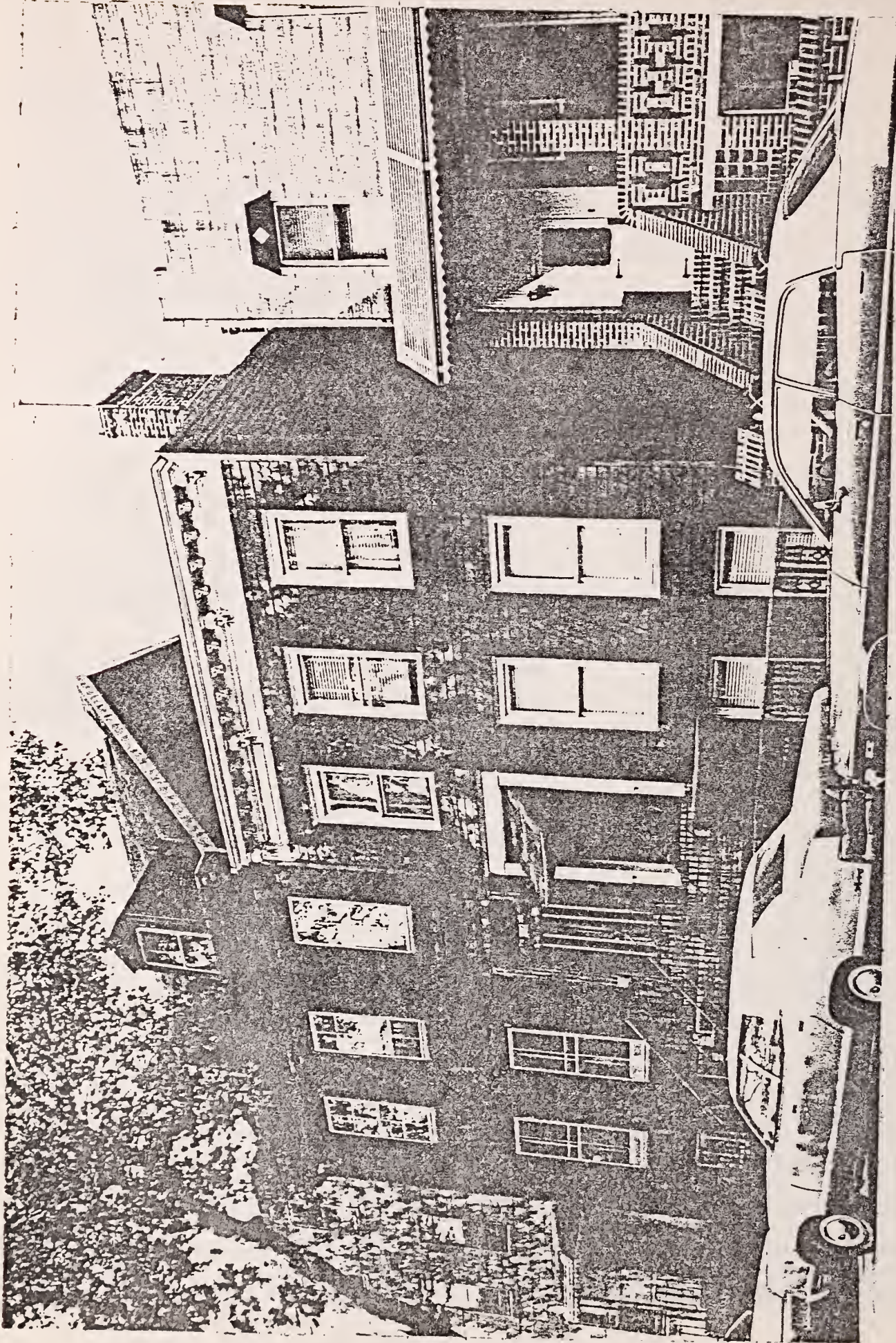


ST. ANTHONY'S OF PADUA
MANHATTAN AVENUE

of three, tiny mansard-roofed houses at Nos. 116-120.

Although actually located on Manhattan Avenue, St. Anthony of Padua church visually closes Milton Street, creating a particularly pleasing vista. This High Victorian Gothic church built of brick with stone trim was designed by the noted church architect P.C. Keely in 1873. This three-bay structure with its steeply pitched roof is dominated by a square central clock tower with an octagonal spire. The bay to either side of the central tower is topped by a false gable. Brick buttresses with crocketed tops and stone quoins encompass the tower. Similar buttresses mark the facade corners. Each facade of the belfry is articulated by louvered lancet windows. The interior plan is reflected on the exterior with its three stone pointed-arched doorways that provide access to the three aisles within. These double-doored entrances are flanked by clustered columns with crocketed capitals. Bronze plaques appear in the pointed arches above the doors. Decorative plaques and belt courses of encaustic tile as well as a decorative stone belt course featuring naturalistically carved birds and plants further ornament this imposing facade.

That part of Noble Street between Franklin and Manhattan is within the proposed historic district. It is lined with two and three-story brick and frame houses. The frame houses are found for the first half of the block to the east of Franklin. The one modern incursion is a six-story brick apartment house on the southwest corner of Lorimer and Noble. There are two fine frame houses on Noble Street that are examples of the type of frame houses that were often found in Greenpoint before the vast majority of them were resided. No. 107 is Italianate, $2\frac{1}{2}$ stories high with a steeply pitched peaked roof pierced by two dormer windows. The door enframingent consists of panelled pilasters and a dentilled cornice carried on two carved brackets. Over the windows are simple dentilled lintels and a dentilled roof cornice is supported by four curvilinear brackets with panelled fascia between them. No. 109 is a two-story house with

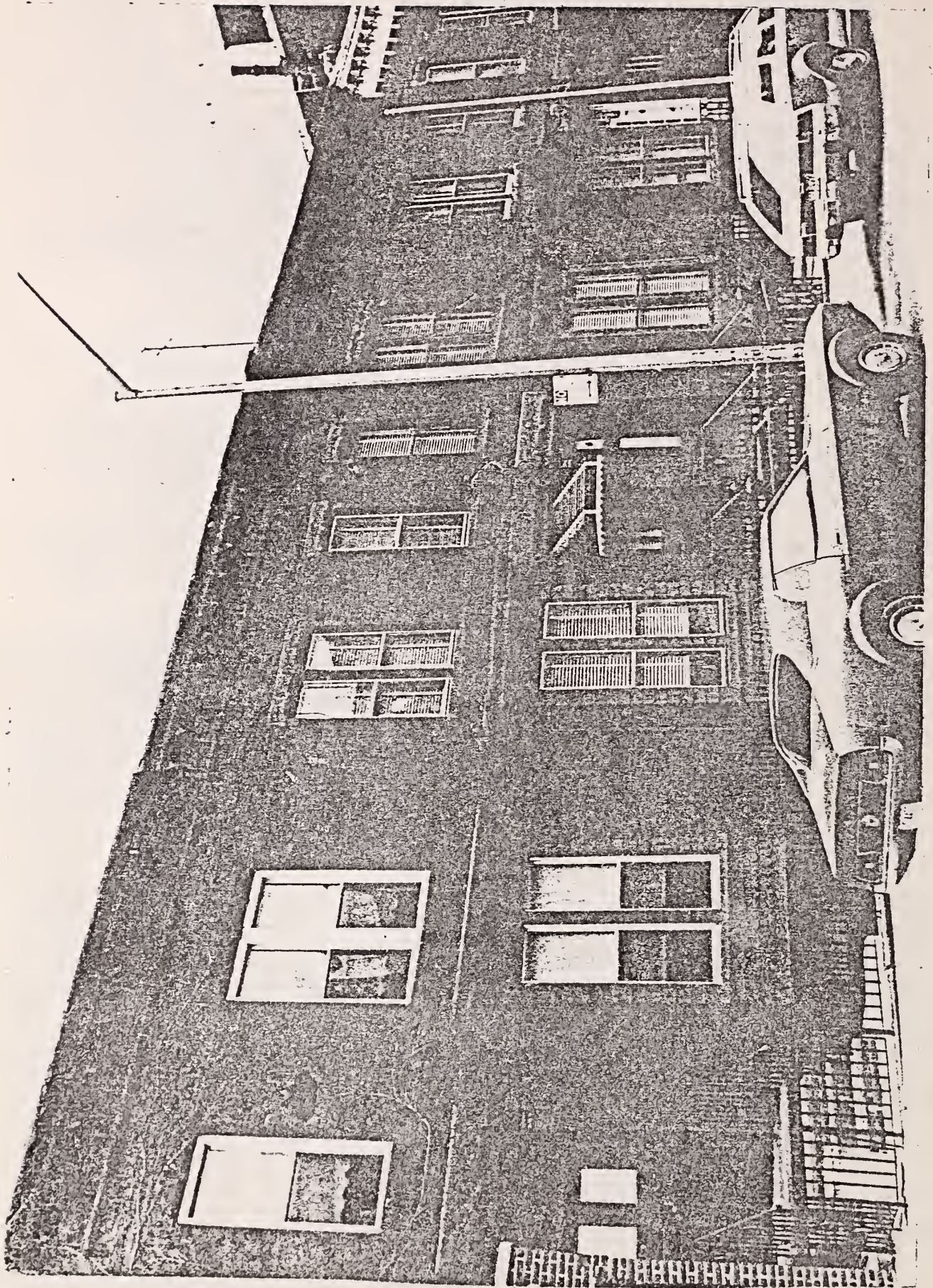


107-109 NOBLE STREET

flat roof. Its charm lies in the contrast between the plain, chaste enframing for the facade openings and the delightful pattern of the wooden side shingles which consists of three rows of flat-edged shingles and then two of "fish scale" shingles. The repetition of the pattern is broken by the introduction of diamond-shaped shingles within a larger diamond between the windows and the door. The roof cornice is carried on four delicate brackets with small angular modillions between them.

The Union Baptist Church is another notable feature on this block. Originally the First Baptist Church of Greenpoint, it was organized in 1847. The present structure on Noble Street (between Franklin and Manhattan) was built about 1865 in early Romanesque Revival style that is sometimes referred to as Lombard or "Round Arch". Examples of this style are infrequent in New York City. The building's gable end faces the street and is flanked by square, flat towers. Characteristic of the style are round-arched openings and corbelling which have been combined in this building to form a pleasing and graceful facade.

There are a number of rows of charming, two-story high, brick workers' houses, designed in the neo-Grec style and built in the 1880's on Clifford Place, Lorimer, Calyer and Guernsey Streets, in the southern part of the proposed district. The set of five brick neo-Grec rowhouses located at 2-10 Clifford Place, between Meserole and Calyer Streets, are the best remaining examples of workers' houses in Greenpoint. Each of the modest two-story structures has a wooden cornice with a set of ten brackets alternating with a panelled frieze. Brown-stone lintels, decorated with incised rosettes and foliation, terminate in fluted brackets. A single one-over-one window appears on the second-floor level over the recessed, double-doored entrance to each house. Double windows, located at the second story, compliment the double-windowed oriel below. The first-floor wooden oriels have been sheathed in alternating bands of imbricated and square shingles. The projecting oriel cornices are modillioned. Most of the rowhouses



WORKER'S HOUSES
2-10 CLIFFORD STREET

retain their iron stoop rails and newels, and in some cases, early bluestone sidewalks.

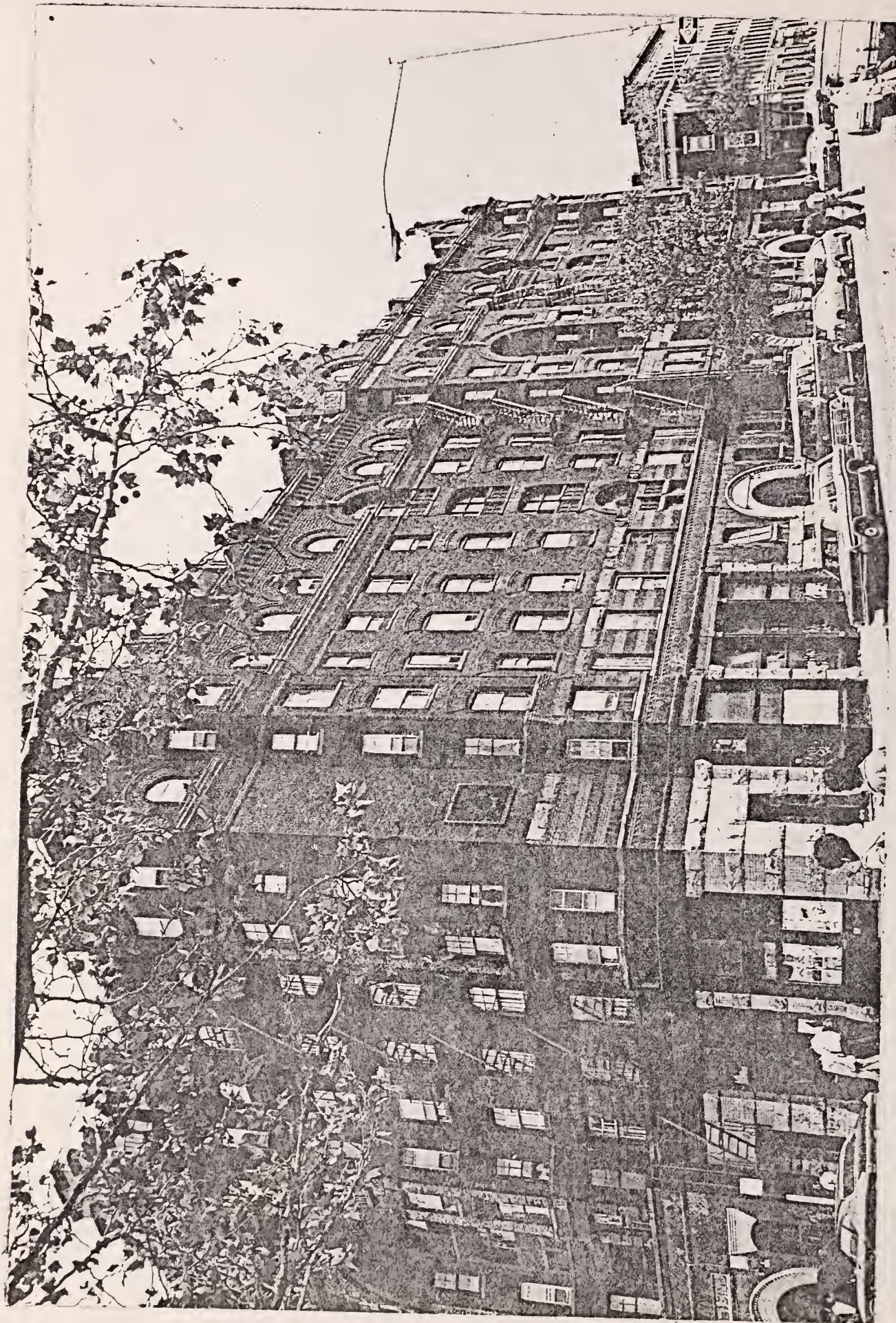
Another building of note in the southern tier of the proposed district is the Greenpoint Home for the Aged at the head of Guernsey Street on Oak Street. Designed in 1882 by the prominent local architect Theobald Engelhardt in the Italianate style, the building is set back from the street within its own modest grounds. The main section of the house is two stories high and five windows wide with two-story high, monumental pilasters flanking the central entrance and window of the second floor. The central section is further enhanced by a pediment with modillioned cornice that carries back over the pilaster capitals. All the openings are round-arched with brick voussoirs and stone keystones. The facade is further enlivened by the use of brick dentilled band courses at the level of the impost blocks. There is an extension to the right of the main building that harmonizes well with the main structure.

Those sections of Franklin Street that have been included in the proposed historic district are basically low, three and four-story brick buildings with commercial ground floors with the exception of the block on which the Astral Apartments stand.

Based on earlier English and European examples of workers' housing, the Astral Apartments (1886) were built by Charles Pratt to provide decent housing for the workers in his oil refinery which was located on the Newtown Creek.

At the time of their construction they were considered innovative because all apartments were provided with a greater degree of air and light than was usually found in tenements of the 1880's. In an extremely laudatory article which appeared in the December 5, 1885 Brooklyn Eagle, the writer observed:

"The one striking feature is that by means of rear extensions twenty-four feet deep, separated by fourteen feet of clear space and extending from the base to the roof, every room in the immense structure contains at least one window, and light shafts and similar accessories to illy lighted and poorly ventilated houses are thus rendered unnecessary, an attainment



THE ASTRAL APARTMENTS
FRANKLIN STREET BETWEEN JAVA AND INDIA

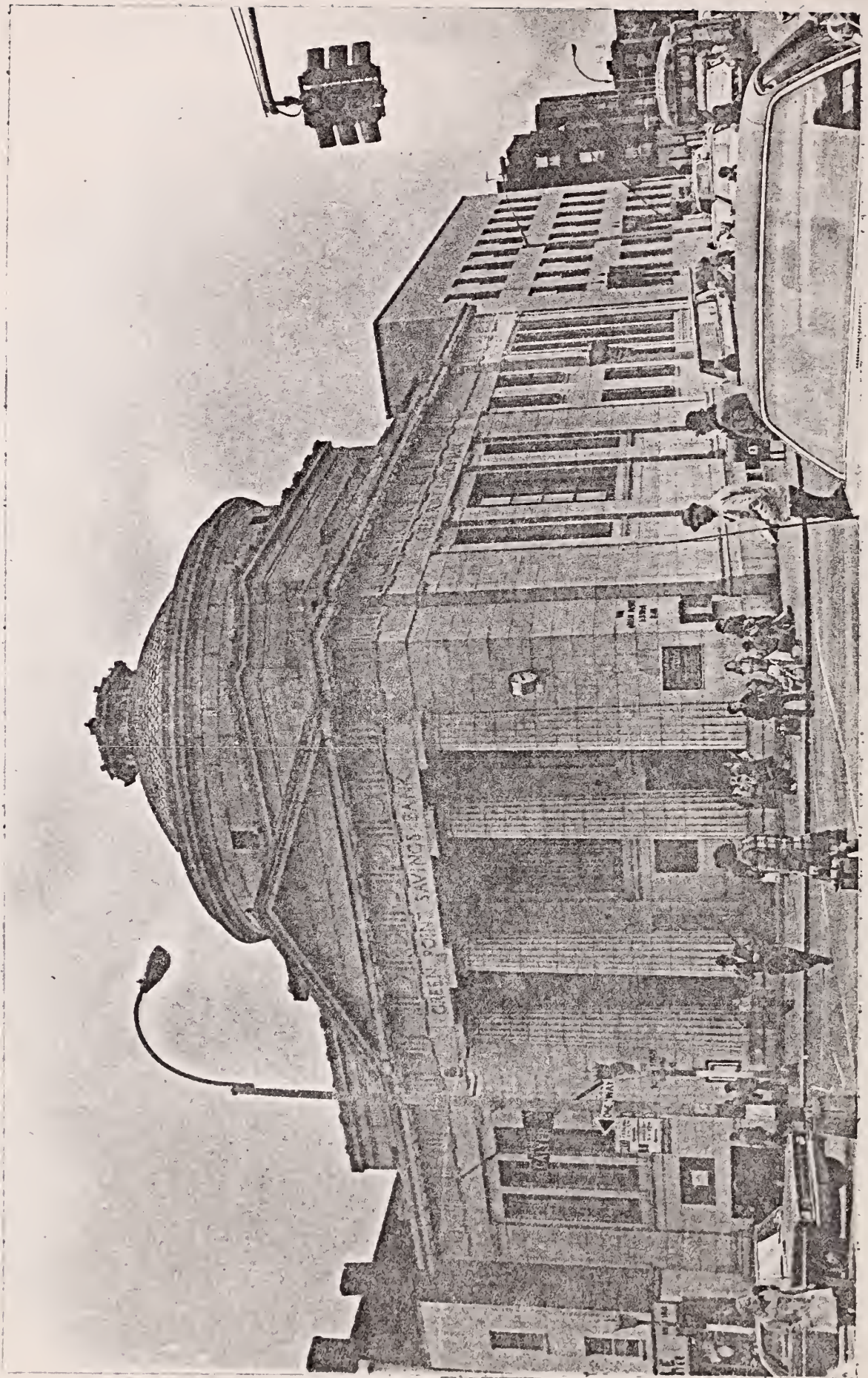
which has never been equalled in a structure of its size in this country."

After further describing the various features of the building, the writer summarizes:

"The general conclusion formed from a careful examination of the building, its location and accessibility, its lighting, ventilating, plumbing and sanitary arrangements, together with a study of the plans, which show a multitude of thoughtful details, is that the Astral Apartments is the most perfect apartment house in the world."

The massive six-story apartment house which occupies the full blockfront on the east side of Franklin Street between Java and India Streets was designed by Hugo Lamb (1848-1903) and Charles A. Rich (1855-1943) of the firm of Lamb & Rich. This active firm was also responsible for a number of college buildings at Barnard, Dartmouth, Smith, Williams, Amherst and Colgate as well as Theodore Roosevelt's estate, Sagamore Hill, at Oyster Bay on Long Island. The three facades of the building have similar treatments. The major elements of the main facade, which faces Franklin Street, are a central projecting full-height section with a deep, three-story high round-arched recession, full-height three-sided bays at the corners and large arched stair hall windows that are out of line with the regular facade fenestration. Picturesque stepped gables crown each of the projecting bays. At the ground floor of the central projecting section and the stair halls are large low round arched entrances. Handsome cast-iron storefronts occupy the ground floor at the corners. Subtle variations in the brick treatment add great interest to the building.

A prominent structure in the study area which dominates the busy intersection of Manhattan Avenue and Calyer Street is the Greenpoint Savings Bank, a handsome neo-Classical structure designed in 1907 by the architectural firm of Helmle and Huberty. The impressive Manhattan Avenue facade boasts an imposing recessed portico with four Greek Doric columns topped by a frieze of triglyphs and metopes that are adorned with medallions. A triangular pediment crowns the portico. The main mass of the bank encompasses two high stories; rising above



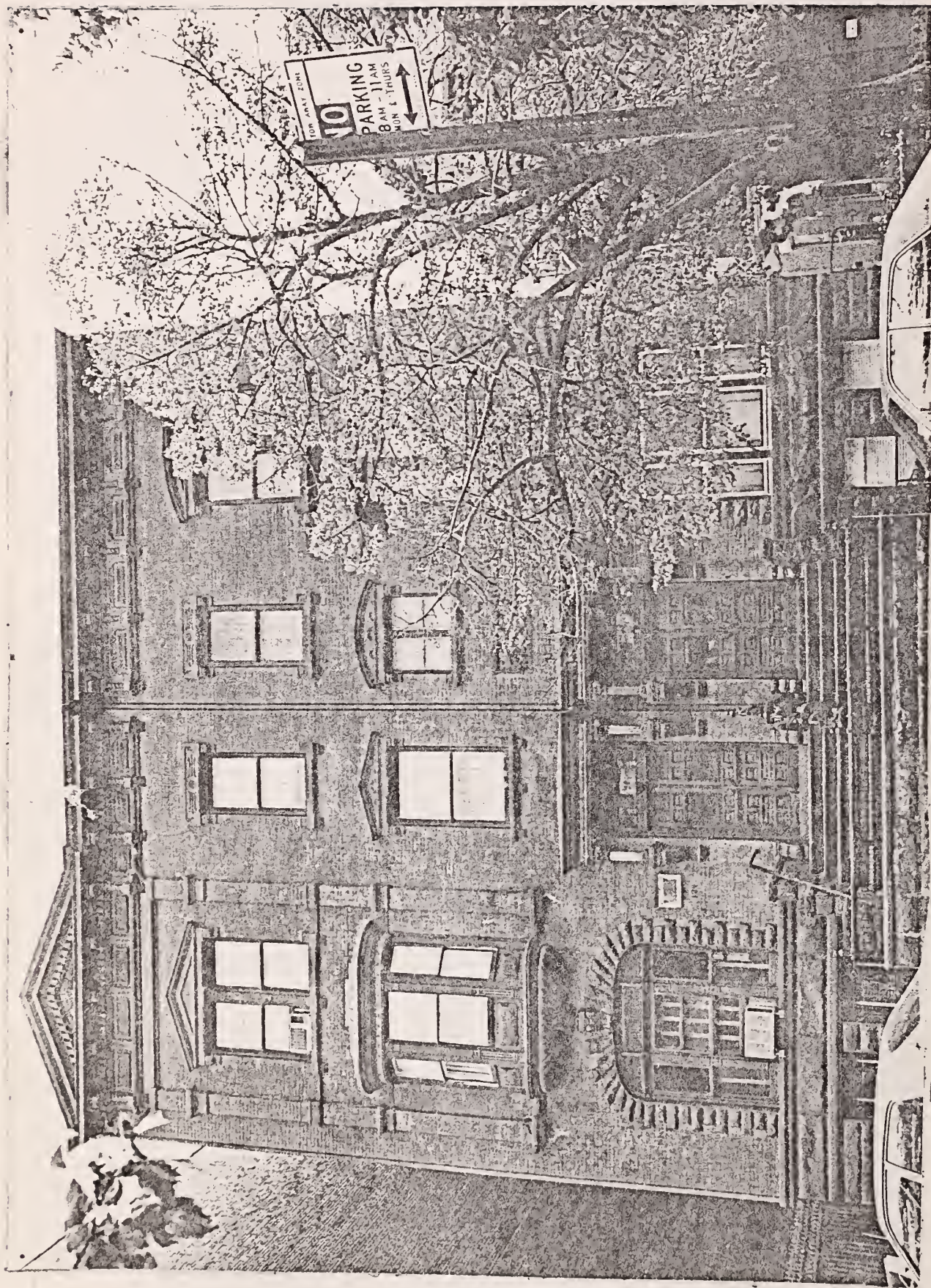
GREENPOINT SAVINGS BANK
807 MANHATTAN AVENUE

these floors and set back from the building line is a shorter half-story embellished with an alternating pattern of lions' heads and guilloche bands. This half-story serves as a base for the cylindrical drum that supports the bank's distinctive shallow dome. The dome, clad in slate shingles that are laid in a fish scale pattern, is crowned by a polygonal lantern that adds a striking note to the low Greenpoint skyline. The Calyer Street facade is a simple but stately composition of full-height Doric pilasters framing plain, square-headed windows.

A careful study of city records as well as published and private research documents reveals very little information about the early developers and architects who built up the area. Since until recently no one considered it important to study the structures of the architects, builders and developers who worked in the vernacular tradition, it is understandable that very little was written about either their lives or their work.

The two architects whose work appears most frequently in the study area are Philemon Tillion and F. Weber. Tillion worked in Greenpoint between 1897 and 1909 but no personal information about him has yet come to light. A similar case is Weber, who worked in the area between 1874 and 1891. Although records research has revealed that he also did work on Bushwick Avenue, nothing further is known about him. Another architect who designed several Greenpoint buildings is Theobald Engelhardt. Born in Brooklyn in 1851, he is best known for designing breweries and brewers' mansions in nearby Bushwick.

Patrick Charles Keely, the architect of Greenpoint's St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic church (1873) was a major architect of Catholic churches in Brooklyn. Born in Ireland in 1816, Keely arrived in the United States in 1842 and became a carpenter in Brooklyn. He built his first church, Saints Peter and Paul, in Williamsburg in 1848. He went on to design at least seventeen other churches in Brooklyn.



122-124 MILTON STREET

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Brooklyn Eagle, December 5, 1885.

Brooklyn Eagle, October 2, 1930.

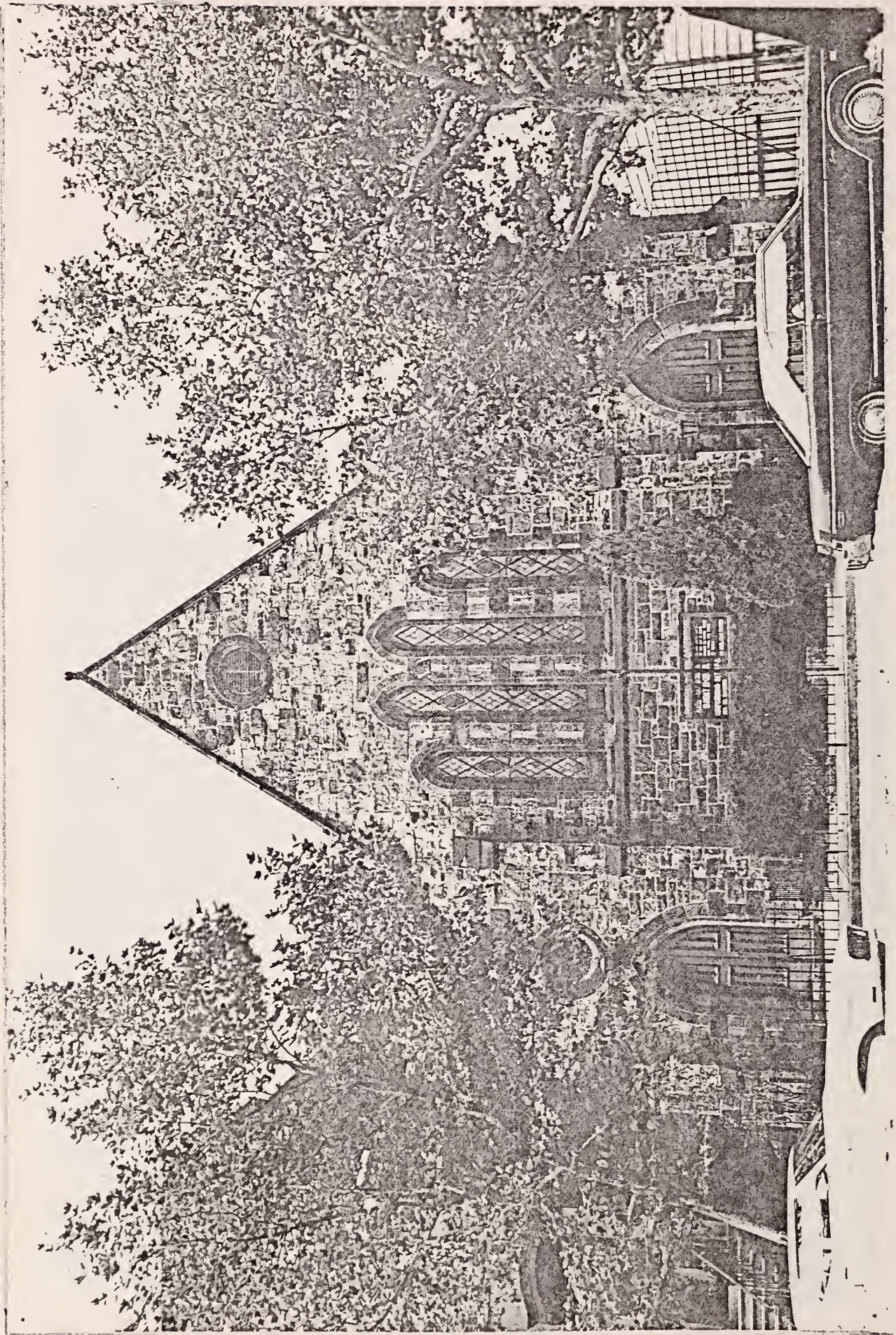
Hazelton, H.I., The Boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens Counties of Nassau and Suffolk, Volume II, New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, Inc., 1925.

New York City Department of City Planning, Community Planning Handbook, Brooklyn Community Planning District I, New York City Department of City Planning: 1973.

New York City Department of City Planning, Randall Bourscheidt, ed., Greenpoint, New York City Department of City Planning: 1974.

New York Times, December 6, 1976.

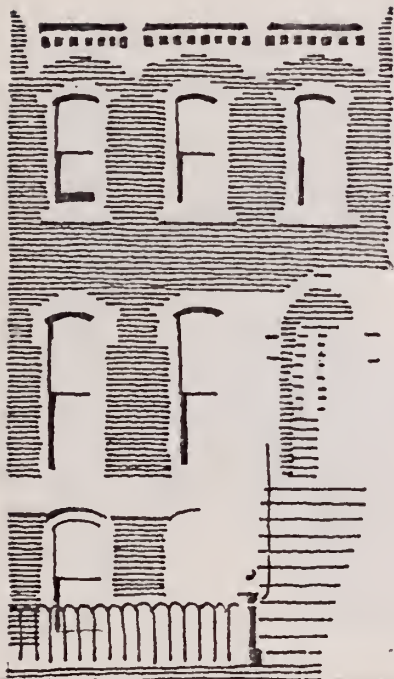
Stiles, Henry R., ed., A History of Kings County Including the City of Brooklyn, Volume I, New York: W.W. Munsell & Co., 1884.



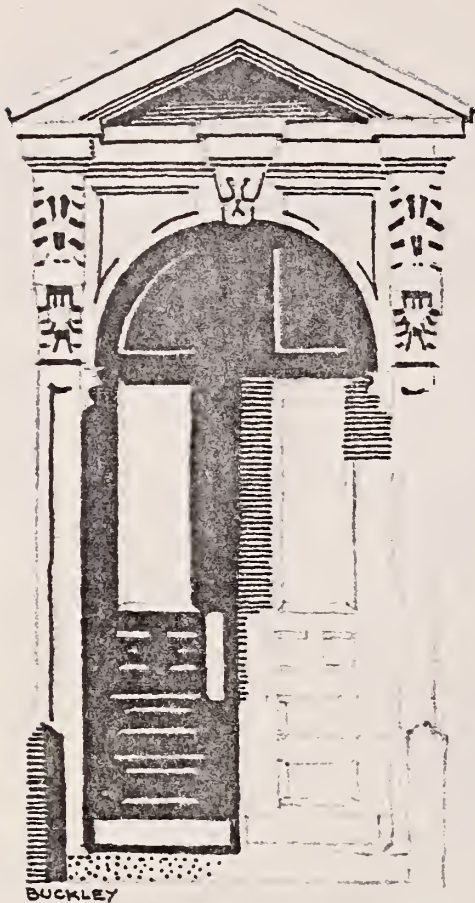
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION
127 - 131 KENT



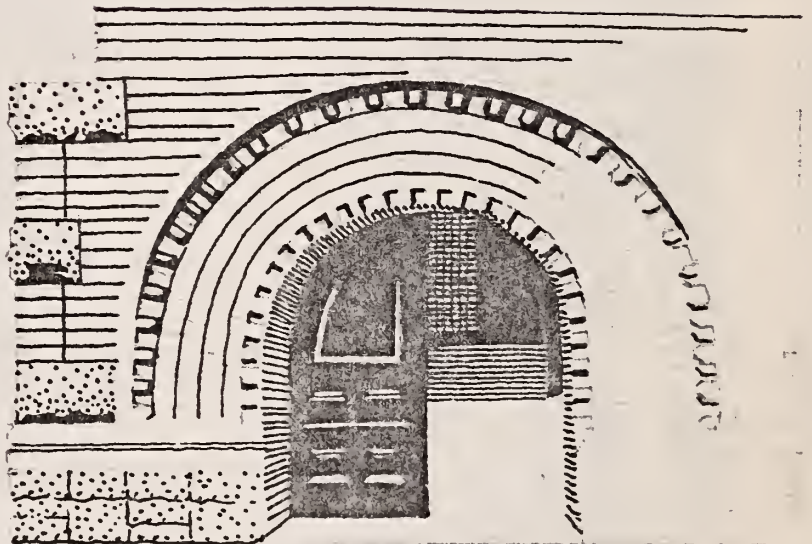
Milton Street



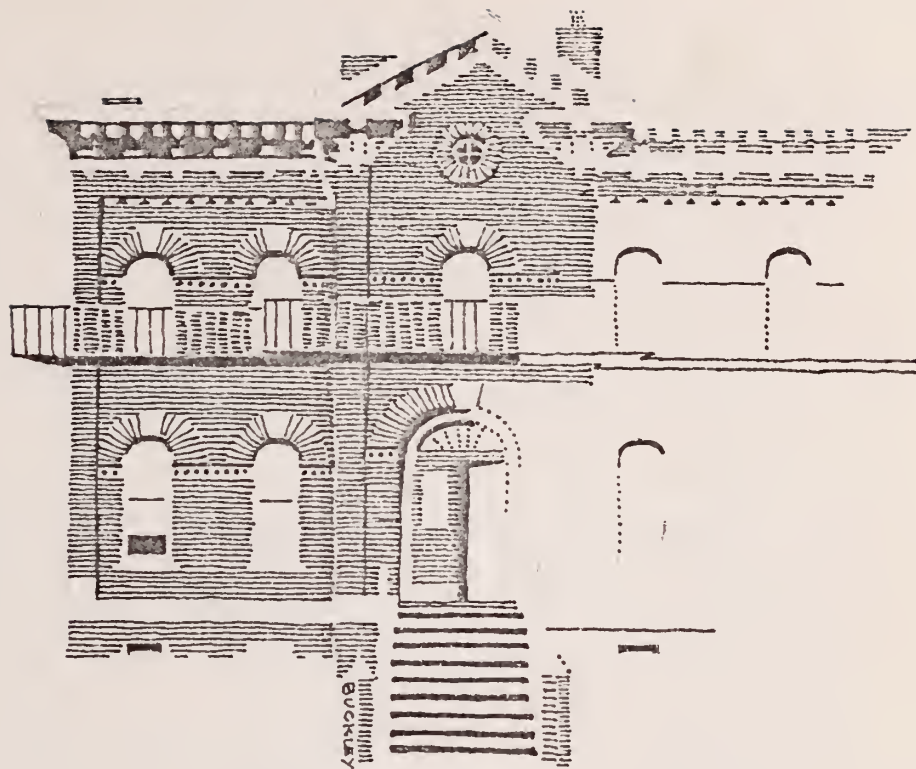
Kent Street



Kent Street



Astral Apartments
Doorway Detail



Greenpoint Home for the Aged
Oak Street



Greenpoint Reformed Church
Milton Street

APPENDIX

GREENPOINT - PLANNING PERSPECTIVES

Demographic Trends

As a result of both the City's policy of diminishing residential land use in industrial areas and the low level of Polish immigration, Greenpoint has been losing population to such a point that its 1970 population was at half of its 1920 peak level. (New York Department of City Planning, 1974). Although continuing to decline in population, the rate of loss appears to be stabilizing. Between 1950 and 1960 according to the U.S. Census, Greenpoint lost more than 12,000 residents. However between 1960 and 1970, Greenpoint lost less than 5,000. The 1970 census showed a population of 51,969 for the area. 1976 numerical estimates are not available for the area but population is believed to be approximately the same.

Despite an apparent stabilization, the median age of Greenpoint's residents has remained higher than that of New York City residents, especially among homeowners. (ibid.) The substantial growth of younger Puerto Rican families living along the industrial peripheries has failed to offset the outmigration of second generation Slavs to other ethnic working class neighborhoods offering more desirable housing stock. As the population ages, residential vacancies may become a major problem.

Housing Trends

Owner occupancy, while considerably under the Brooklyn average of 23 percent, is a moderate 15 percent. Along most side streets in the proposed

East



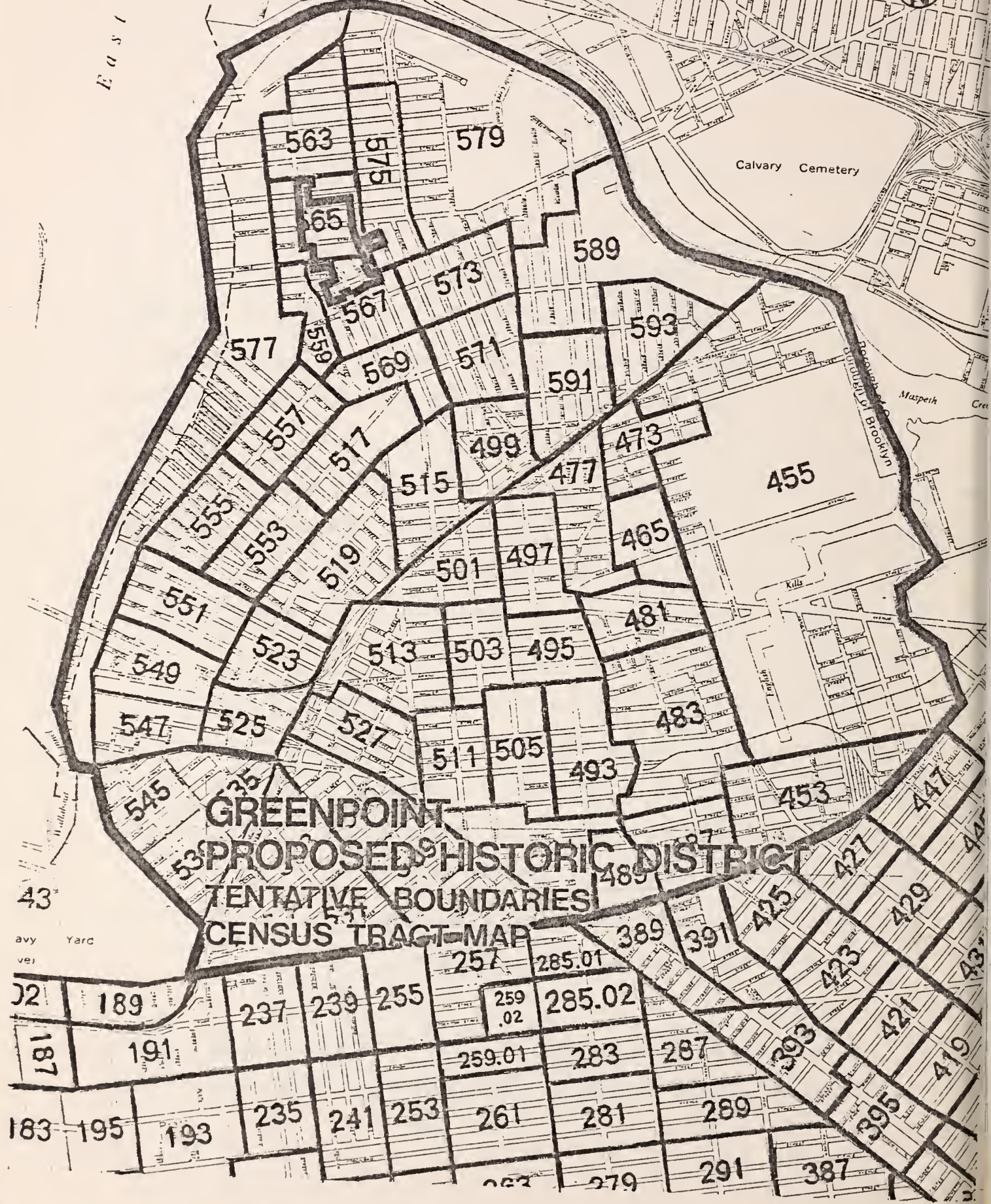
Calvary Cemetery

Brooklyn

Maspeth Creek

Kills

**GREENPOINT
PROPOSED HISTORIC DISTRICT
TENTATIVE BOUNDARIES
CENSUS TRACT MAP**



POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PROPOSED
GREENPOINT HISTORIC DISTRICT

	<u>Proposed Greenpoint Historic District</u>	<u>Brooklyn</u>	<u>New York City</u>
<u>Racial Characteristics</u>			
Percent Black	.03	25.21	21.20
Percent White	98.65	73.24	76.61
Percent Other Nonwhite	1.05	1.53	2.25
<u>Age Characteristics</u>			
Percent under 17	27.41	31.36	28.30
Percent 17-65	60.61	57.54	59.70
Percent over 65	11.98	11.10	12.00
<u>Housing Characteristics*</u>			
Percent owner-occupied	15.26	23.25	22.93
Percent renter-occupied	84.74	76.75	77.07
Persons per unit	2.71	2.94	2.73
Percent single room occupancy	.46	2.37	4.78
Percent overcrowded units	1.62	2.92	2.78

*Based upon census tract characteristics of 1970 census.

historic district however, over sixty percent of residential structures are occupied by owners. Although over sixty-three percent of Greenpoint's total housing stock is predominantly frame, surveys by the Department of City Planning in 1973 revealed that more than 90% of the residential buildings were in sound condition with nearly 60% in good to excellent structural condition. (op. cit). However within most of the proposed historic district the same survey showed that housing condition was only good to fair. Asphalt and aluminum siding are very prevalent in Greenpoint despite a longstanding reluctance on the part of banks to finance mortgages or home improvement loans. Turnover is low in both rental and owner-occupied units.

Historically a balance between industrial and residential land uses evolved in Greenpoint, despite the repeated efforts by city government since 1916 to discourage the mix. The community is solidly working class, generally employed within the area. The health of the residential community is therefore greatly dependent upon the health of the industry. However the closing of such major employers as Schaeffer Brewery, the cyclical demands for wood from the Lumber Exchange and the closings of marginal industries along the river due to the recession have greatly reduced jobs since the DCP study. Since many blocks contain both light industry and residences, including at least two blocks within our potential district, the decline of marginal industries has a potentially blighting effect. India Street west of Franklin and Manhattan Avenue between Meserole and Calyer shows examples of mixed-use blight. If this area is included within the district, it should be rehabilitated.

Commerical Trends

Manhattan Avenue from Greenpoint to Nassau Avenue is the commercial core of Greenpoint, offering a wide variety of establishments. Although between

1957 and 1967 retail sales in all of Greenpoint dropped more than one quarter, due to loss of population and competition from shopping centers outside of the area, over 80% of core area store owners surveyed in 1973 described their business as fair to good and more than 60% reported stable or increasing sales. (op. cit.) Deterioration however is apparent on Manhattan Avenue north of Greenpoint Avenue. Over 60% of merchants in this area reported that their business had decreased over the past five years, complaining of increasing vandalism, reduced buying power of customers and competition from shopping centers. (ibid.)

Zoning

Mixed industrial-residential zoning was pioneered in Greenpoint with its 1974 R6(MI-1) zoning which is found just north of the proposed historic district along Franklin between Eagle and Java Streets. M-1 zoning for light manufacturing extends only into the district at India Street. Manhattan Avenue between Kent and Norman Streets is zoned C4-3, subregional commercial center, with a C1-1 overlay over the Avenue. The rest of the district is zoned R6, which while somewhat higher than the existing coverage, was intended to encourage infill housing and to permit additions or alterations necessary to retain population. Such activities were recently stimulated by the down-zoning of the residential areas in 1974 when R4 areas were changed to R6.

Planning Recommendations

In order to retain a population base in Greenpoint jobs and housing amenities must be preserved. As local industry has declined, Greenpoint has increasingly had to compete with other commuter residential areas that offer better schools, larger residences, more solid housing stock and handier transportation. Two types of programs are therefore warranted--economic incentives to small businesses and industries and strengthening of residential services and amenities.

Nonetheless a great deal of rehabilitation is necessary in target areas north of Greenpoint Avenue and northeast of Calyer Street. Masonry multiple dwellings similar to the Astral Apartments on Franklin Street at India Street may require substantial interior rehabilitation. A combination of Community Management and City Programs such as J-51 may be appropriate mechanisms to revitalize these structures. Frame tenements located beyond the confines of the proposed district are badly deteriorated and may require demolition. While infill housing may be required to replace such tenements in residential core areas, care must be taken that infill housing is low in scale so as not to create vacancy problems in the rowhouse stock. It is also recommended that the area be declared a Neighborhood Preservation Area, making the one and two-family homes eligible for Section 312 loans and SHIP program.

The commercial area along Manhattan Avenue from Greenpoint to Nassau Avenues has been strengthened by the consolidation of central commercial zoning. If designation occurs, the sense of place on that avenue could be enhanced by a uniform signage and facade restoration program. Such a program

however should be designed and run by the Manhattan Avenue Merchants Association with the assistance of city agencies in order to reflect community values.

The downturn of the economic climate and the small scale of industrial incentive programs have caused the industrial renewal of Greenpoint to progress more slowly than had originally been anticipated by city agencies. Since the cyclical nature of the economy may allow a certain number of small vacant industrial buildings to be reclaimed, their demolition should be avoided where deterioration does not present public safety problems. Efforts should be made to encourage even small industry to concentrate so that costs of infrastructure and protective services can be minimized. Although relocation to achieve such an end is probably not feasible at this time due to the weakened economic condition of many industries, subsidies and incentives being recommended by the Mayor's recently announced economic policy should ultimately favor concentration, while not precluding assistance to industries located elsewhere. A local industrial and wholesaling assistance office should be established to promote Greenpoint and offer advice on programs, rehabilitation monies and locations available within the area. The Greenpoint-Williamsburg Neighborhood Facilities Corp. is currently providing some location assistance to fill abandoned buildings in the community.

In order to residentially strengthen Greenpoint, a program of housing rehabilitation and infill construction should be pursued. Banks have been traditionally reluctant to make home improvement loans, in part because of the income structure of the area and in part because the old R-4 zoning created a great deal of noncompliance. Since the 1974 rezoning to R-6 and the growth of activism among new groups of brownstoners, there has been some growth in loan activity.

